DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 148 969 UD 017 805

TITLE	School Desegregation in Stamford, Connecticut.
INSTITUTION	Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Jul 77
NOTE	76p.; For related documents see UD 017 402 - 418 and UD 017 447 - 452
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$4.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Blacks; Elementary Secondary Education; *Integration Effects; Integration Litigation; *Integration Methods; *Integration Plans; *Integration Readiness; *Integration Studies; Public Schools; Race Relations; *School Integration
IDENTIFIERS	*Connecticut (Stamford)

ABSTRACT

The desegregation of the Stamford public schools began in the 1960's with the construction of new schools to meet the needs of the growing student population. The board of education implemented a plan to desegregate the high schools in 1962, the middle schools in 1967 and '68, and the elementary schools in 1970 and '72. In desegregating its school system, the board of education used several different methods including busing and magnet schools. Issues roused by this action included: (1) adequate minority representation on the administrative and teaching staff, (2) curriculum modification related to the multiethnic classrooms, and (3) other issues such as student discipline, achievement, and attitudes. Among the findings of this report are the following: (1) the Stamford Board of Education was found to have successfully developed and implemented plans for the desegregation of the high, middle, and elementary schools over a 15 year period, (2) the under representation of minority staff in teaching, administrative, and other professional positions is one of the most serious problems in the school system, (3) ability grouping as it now operates tends to resegregate the school system and reinforce feelings of inadequacy in the minority students in the middle and high schools, (4) although no comprehensive survey was conducted, there is some evidence that indicates that some teachers had difficulty understanding and communicating with the minority students assigned to their schools, (5) discipline is an ongoing problem in the Stamford public school system (6) although no comprehensive review of programs for Spanish-speaking and other non-English-speaking students was conducted, members of the Spanish-speaking community and school department staff said that Spanish-speaking students were "at the bottom of the ladder", and (7) there is inadequate participation on the part of minority parents in the parent teacher associations. (Author/AM)

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SCHOOL DESEGREGATION IN STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

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July 1977

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SCHOOL DESEGREGATION IN STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

JAN 10 1978

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
July 1977

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

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John A. Buggs, Staff Director

Sirs and Madam:

The Connecticut Advisory Committee submits this report, School Desegregation in Stamford, Connecticut, as part of its responsibility to advise the Commission on relevant civil rights problems within the State. This review was requested by you as part of the Commission's national study on school desegregation. As you know, a summary of this report was published in the Commission's report, Fulfilling the Letter and Spirit of the Law: Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools.

This report reviews the desegregation process in Stamford, Connecticut. It includes the history of the desegregation process, community involvement in Stamford's desegregation plan, and current issues related to desegregation.

In April 1976, the Advisory Committee held an informal public hearing in Stamford. Persons who participated in this hearing included school administrators, teachers, parents, students, and representatives of community organizations.

School desegregation in Stamford was achieved without major disruption of the educational process. The Stamford Board of Education and various community organizations were instrumental in making the relatively smooth transition possible. This report reviews factors which affected the situation both favorably and unfavorably.

There are still unresolved problems in Stamford related to school desegregation. It is our hope that this report will shed light on some of these problems and that our

recommendations for change will be implemented by the appropriate public and private agencies.

We urge the Commission's support of our recommendations.

Sincerely yours,

/S/
John Rose, Jr.
Chairperson

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Advisory Committee wishes to thank the staff of the Commission's Northeastern Regional Office, New York, N. Y., for its help in the preparation of this report. Primary field investigation was conducted by Diane Brewer. Research and writing assistance was provided by Linda Dunn, research writer, and legal review was provided by Eugene Bogan, regional attorney. Additional staff support was provided by America Ortiz, Diane Diggs, and Victor Bracero. The overall supervision for this project was the responsibility of Jacques E. Wilmore, Regional Director.

Final production of the report was the responsibility of Deborah Harrison, Vivian Hauser, Rita Higgins, Audrey Holton, and Vivian Washington, supervised by Bobby Wortman, in the Commission's Publications Support Center, Office of Management.

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PREFACE

The United States Commission on Civil Rights released on August 24, 1976, its report to the Nation: Fulfilling the Letter and Spirit of the Law: Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools.

The report's findings and recommendations were based upon information gathered during a 10-month school desegregation project. This included four formal hearings (Boston, Massachusetts; Denver, Colorado; Louisville, Kentucky; and Tampa, Florida); four open meetings held by State Advisory Committees (Berkeley, California; Corpus Christi, Texas; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Stamford, Connecticut); a survey of nearly 1,300 local school districts; and 29 case studies of communities which had difficulties with desegregation, had moderate success with desegregation, or had substantial success with desegregation.

Subsequent to the report's release, considerable interest was generated concerning the specifics of the case study findings, which, owing to space limitations in the national report, were limited to a few brief paragraphs. In an effort to comply with public requests for more detailed information, Commission staff have prepared monographs for each of the case studies. These monographs were written from the extensive field notes already collected and supplemented, if needed, with further interviews in each community. They reflect, in detail, the original case study purpose of finding which local policies, practices, and programs in each community surveyed contributed to peaceful desegregation and which ones did not.

It is hoped that the following monograph will serve to further an understanding of the school desegregation process in this Nation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Advisory Committee Project

In January 1976 the Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights initiated a review of the process of desegregation in the Stamford public schools. The Advisory Committee analyzed factors which contributed to the implementation from 1962 to 1972 of plans to desegregate the elementary, middle, and high schools and reviewed current problems related to desegregation in the school system. In both cases, the Advisory Committee considered factors such as minority representation on the staff; attitudes of minority and nonminority staff; support from the city's political, civic, and religious leadership; community participation; curriculum modifications related to desegregation; and issues such as student motivation, achievement, and discipline.

For the Stamford study, staff from the Commission's Northeastern Regional Office and members of the Connecticut Advisory Committee interviewed school department staff, city officials, representatives of civic, minority, and educational groups, parents, and students from January through March 1976. An informal public hearing was held by the Advisory Committee on April 29, 1976, to obtain further information from these groups.[1]

The Advisory Committee is issuing this report to the general public with the hope of helping to identify current problems in the Stamford public schools and contributing to the ongoing process of the successful desegregation of the schools.

The City of Stamford

Located in the middle of wealthy suburban communities on the Long Island Sound, Stamford is an expanding urban center. According to the 1970 census, Stamford has a population of approximately 108,798 persons. Of those, 90,529 or 83.2 percent are white, 13,408 or 12.3 percent are black, 4,129 or 3.9 percent are of Spanish-speaking background, and 732 are members of other racial and ethnic groups.[2] It is generally accepted that the 1970 census undercounted both black and Hispanic persons by at least 7 percent,[3] so the black population may be estimated at 13.2 percent and the Hispanic population at 4.1 percent.

Unlike in other Connecticut cities, the Spanish-speaking population in Stamford is not largely Puerto Rican. Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, and Central and South Americans each constitute approximately a third of the Spanish-speaking population.

Stamford's total population grew from 92,713 in 1960 to 108,798 in 1970, an increase of 17.3 percent. During that period the white population grew by less than 6.4 percent while the black population grew by 80.1 percent.[4]

Approximately 68,221 persons are in the Stamford work force. Of those, 5,596 or 8.2 percent are black and 1,760 or 2.6 percent are Spanish speaking.[5] The black population is relatively poor: the median income for black families is $7,593 in comparison to $13,571 for the city and $17,818 for the surrounding suburban area. In contrast to many urban areas, the median income for Spanish-speaking families is higher than that of black families, $10,225.[6]

The city covers approximately 39.2 square miles, and is 11 miles long at its longest point and 5-1/4 miles at its widest point. It is divided roughly into three sections by the Connecticut Turnpike on the south and the Merritt Parkway on the north. The area of the city south of the turnpike includes most of the land in the city that is zoned for general industrial use. It also includes much of the low-income, predominately black housing in the city; a largely white, traditionally conservative, middle-income neighborhood known as Shippan; and a commercial shopping area. The middle section is made up of residential pockets of different ethnic and racial groups. The traditionally Italian West Side neighborhood is becoming increasingly

black and Puerto Rican. The section of the city north of the Merritt Parkway is a predominately white upper income residential area.

In recent years, increasing numbers of corporations have relocated to the Stamford area from New York City and elsewhere in the country. According to the Stamford Area Commerce and Industry Association, 19 of Fortune magazine's top 500 industries have their corporate headquarters in the Stamford-Norwalk area. These companies include Pitney Bowes, Inc. (the single largest employer in the city), Xerox, Olin Corporation, and American Can Company. Other large employers include Clairol (the second largest), Atlantic Cement, and American Thread.

Stamford has a "weak mayor" form of government with an elected mayor and a legislative council of 40 members, 2 elected from each of 20 districts in the city. Major city policy programs are determined by the Stamford Board of Representatives. Capital and operating budgets are approved by the representatives and a six-member board of finance, elected on a citywide basis. The capital budget must also be approved by the planning board and the mayor. Six departments and many other administrative boards, agencies, and commissions oversee other activities such as education, police, fire, planning, zoning, parks and recreation, and housing.

In March 1976, there were 24,937 registered Democrats, 19,090 registered Republicans, and 6,612 unaffiliated registered voters.[7] The current mayor, Louis Clapes, is a Republican, but Democrats are in the majority on the board of representatives.

The Stamford Public Schools

Facilities

In 1975-76 the Stamford school system consisted of three 4-year high schools, four middle schools with seventh and eighth grades, and 17 elementary schools. Additional citywide programs included an alternate high school located in a former elementary school. One of the elementary schools was a magnet school operated in conjunction with the Bank Street College of Education in New York City. The school system also had special education and bilingual

programs for eligible students, and programs for disadvantaged and gifted students.[8]

Two of the high schools, two middle schools, and five elementary schools have been built since 1960. Major additions were made at the third high school, and one elementary school was gutted and rebuilt and another renovated with a large media center added. Most of the other elementary schools were built more than 20 years ago.

The construction of the new schools played a significant role in the desegregation of the school system.

Student Population

In 1975, 19,118 students were enrolled in the Stamford public schools, of whom a total of 31.4 percent were members of minority groups--24.6 percent black, 6 percent Spanish speaking, 0.8 percent Asian American. In the 10 years from 1965 to 1975, the total enrollment grew from 18,656 students to 19,118, an increase of about 2.5 percent. The number of black students grew from 2,855 to 4,708, an increase of 64.9 percent, and the number of Spanish-speaking background students from 391 to 1,139, an increase of 191.3 percent, while the number of white students decreased 14.5 percent from 15,341 to 13,118. (Table A shows the student population by race from 1965 through 1975. Tables B and C provide the same information for elementary schools and for middle and high schools, respectively.) In 1975 minorities composed 34.1 percent of the enrollment in the elementary schools, 31.7 percent in the middle schools, and 26.4 percent in the high schools.

In contrast to the total school enrollment, the number of elementary school students had decreased from 11,355 in 1965 by about 12.4 percent to 9,948 in 1975. The number of black students grew from 1,918 to 2,559, an increase of 35.5 percent, and the number of Spanish-speaking background students from 291 to 691, an increase of 139.5 percent. The number of white students decreased by 30 percent from 9,102 to 6,554. (As shown in table B, the number of white elementary school students grew through 1967 but declined from 1970 through 1973--when the actual desegregation process occurred--by more than 5 percent each year, several percentage points more than in other years. The number of black elementary students increased steadily until 1973, after which it too declined. The number of Spanish-speaking

elementary students increased most rapidly between 1965 and 1971.)

In the period 1965-75, the middle school student population decreased from 3,996 to 3,108. The number of black students at this level grew from 555 to 793 while the number of white students decreased from 3,363 to 2,122 (see table D).

The total high school population increased from 3,305 in 1965 to 6,000 in 1975, an increase of 81.5 percent. Both the numbers of black and white students increased--the black students by 235.3 percent and the white students by 53.6 percent.

At the Connecticut Advisory Committee's informal public hearing in April 1976, school staff and parents said that, except for isolated cases, they did not believe that the public school system had lost a significant number of white students because of the desegregation effort. (pp. 469-70)

From 1970 through 1973, when the actual desegregation process occurred, the number of white elementary students did decline by more than 5 percent each year. However, as Superintendent Robert Peebles pointed out, "The average decline in white elementary school population in 1970s [nationally] has been over 5 percent. It was foreshadowed by a decline in the number of births and the pre-school census...."[9]

From 1971 through 1975, the period for which data on the parochial schools are available, the white student population in the Stamford elementary and middle parochial schools decreased from 2,010 to 1,937. The total parochial white student population increased by almost 250 students between 1972 and 1973, the first 2 years of the desegregation of the public elementary schools. This trend, which may have been at least in part due to the transfer of students by parents who were apprehensive of the desegregation effort, was no longer evident by 1974. (See table D.) Data on the other private schools in Stamford were not available at the writing of this report.

The white enrollment decreased in other urban public school systems near Stamford following a national trend of declining school populations. The white enrollment also did not change significantly in the nearly all-white suburban

districts which would have received students leaving the Stamford school system. The white student population in the larger school districts of Bridgeport and Norwalk declined by approximately 3,000 and 1,800, respectively, between 1968 and 1974. During that same period, schools in the nearby communities of Darien and Greenwich also lost several hundred white students; only Wilton, of five areas surveyed, showed a small increase in the white student population. (See table E.) That the decline in the student population of nearby urban school systems was not accompanied by an increase in the white student population in either the parochial schools or in predominately white suburban schools suggests that the desegregation effort in Stamford did not result in significant "white flight" from the school system.

School Board

The public school system is governed by a nine-member bipartisan board of education. Members are elected citywide for 3-year terms. Each year, the Democratic and Republican parties each nominate two candidates for three openings on the board. The school board establishes administrative and academic policy for the school system, approves the budget each year before it is submitted to the board of finance and board of representatives, and appoints the superintendent of schools.

In 1975-76 Ellen Camhi was president. One of the nine members, William Martin, was black. Four of the members had been on the board since 1970 when the elementary school desegregation process began.[10]

School Staff

In 1975 the school system had a staff of 1,388 persons. Of those, 76 or 5.5 percent were black, 17 or 1.2 percent were of Spanish-speaking background, and the remainder were white. (A full discussion of the staff is included in chapter III.)

Superintendent Robert Peebles came to Stamford from the Marshfield, Massachusetts, school district. He had worked on a consultant basis for the Stamford public schools in June 1975, discussed the superintendency in July of that year, and became superintendent for the 1975-76 school year.

TABLE A

STUDENTS BY RACE/ETHNICITY: 1965-1975

Stamford Public Schools

Year	Black	% Black	Span. Sp.	% Span. Sp.	White	% White	Total*
1965	2,855	15.3%	391	2.1%	15,341	82.2%	18,656
1966	3,122	16.2	469	2.4	15,590	80.9	19,262
1967	3,389	16.8	545	2.7	16,116	80.1	20,131
1968	3,683	18.0	634	3.1	16,113	78.5	20,517
1969	3,864	18.4	824	3.9	16,133	77.0	20,960
1970	4,133	19.9	821	3.9	15,653	75.6	20,715
1971	4,333	21.0	936	4.0	15,362	74.0	20,730
1972	4,508	22.0	973	4.7	14,825	72.5	20,422
1973	4,619	23.0	1,069	5.3	14,185	70.9	20,002
1974	4,541	23.2	1,104	5.6	13,736	70.4	19,515
1975	4,708	24.6	1,139	6.0	13,118	68.6	19,118

*Asian, American Indian, and other minority students except black and Spanish speaking are included in the total.

Source: Stamford Public Schools

TABLE B

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS BY RACE/ETHNICITY : 1965-1975

Stamford Public Schools

Year	Black	% Black	Change	White	% White	Change	Other	Total
1965	1,918	16.9%		9,102	80.2%		335	11,355
1966	2,143	18.1	+11.7%	9,315	78.5	+ 2.3 %	411	11,869
1967	2,311	18.9	+ 7.8	9,445	77.3	+ 1.4	459	12,215
1968	2,440	20.0	+ 5.6	9,264	75.8	- 1.9	514	12,218
1969	2,575	21.0	+ 5.5	9,077	73.9	- 2.0	630	12,282
1970	2,718	22.7	+ 5.6	8,602	71.9	- 5.2	643	11,963
1971	2,768	23.8	+ 1.8	8,147	70.0	- 5.3	714	11,629
1972	2,803	25.0	+ 1.3	7,676	68.5	- 5.8	729	11,208
1973	2,841	26.2	+ 1.4	7,199	66.5	- 6.2	779	10,819
1974	2,684	26.1	- 5.5	6,791	66.1	- 5.7	803	10,278
1975	2,599	26.1	- 3.2	6,554	65.9	- 3.5	795	9,948

Source: Stamford Public Schools

TABLE C

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS BY RACE/ETHNICITY: 1965-1975

Stamford Public Schools

	Middle Schools			High Schools		
Year	Total*	Black	White	Total	Black	White
1965	3,996	555	3,363	3,305	382	2,876
1966	4,140	596	3,460	3,233	381	2,797
1967	4,375	658	3,615	3,541	420	3,056
1968	4,641	735	3,754	3,658	508	3,095
1969	4,684	784	3,702	3,994	505	3,354
1970**	4,178	731	3,285	4,574	684	3,766
1971**	3,143	588	2,425	5,807	905	4,718
1972	3,160	661	2,366	5,921	983	4,719
1973	3,163	689	2,310	5,873	1,022	4,607
1974	3,184	738	2,266	6,002	1,096	4,656
1975	3,108	793	2,122	6,000	1,281	4,418

* Spanish speaking students and members of other minority groups other than black are included in the total.

** During 1970 and 1971, the 9th grade was transferred from the middle to the high schools. This transfer accounts for the decrease in middle school population and increase in high school population during these years.

Source: Stamford Public Schools

TABLE D

PAROCHIAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY*: 1971-1975

Stamford, Connecticut

Year	White	Black	Spanish Speaking	Other	American Indian
1971	2,010	45	40	1	0
1972	2,196	59	48	3	1
1973	2,255	78	67	8	2
1974	2,067	78	55	7	1
1975	1,937	92	74	4	5

* Data include 8 of the 10 Catholic schools in Stamford, those directly responsible to the Diocese of Bridgeport. Mother of God Academy, and Sacred Heart Academy, also located in Stamford, are considered to be private schools.

Source: Bernard Helfrich, superintendent of schools, Diocese of Bridgeport, Ministry of Christian Formation, letter to Jacques E. Wilmore, regional director, USCCRNERO, April 21, 1976, available in USCCRNERO files.

TABLE E

TOTAL WHITE PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 1968-1974

Selected School Districts in Connecticut

Year	Stamford	Bridgeport	Norwalk	Darien	Greenwich	Wilton
1968	16,063	12,677	13,925	5,191	10,674	3,649
1971-72	15,362	11,602	13,591	5,065	10,674	4,211
1973-74	14,185	9,932	12,530	5,080	10,366	4,294
1974-75	13,737	9,527	12,139	4,984	10,304	4,303
Change						
1968-74	-2,327	-3,150	-1,786	-207	-370	+654
	-14.5%	-24.8%	-12.8%	-4.0%	-3.5%	+17.9%

Source: State Department of Education

Notes to Chapter I

1. Page numbers in parentheses cited here and hereafter in this report refer to statements made to the Connecticut Advisory Committee during its informal public hearing in Stamford, Conn., Apr. 29, 1976, as recorded in the transcript of that hearing. The transcript is available for review in the Stamford Public Library and in the Commission's Northeastern Regional Office, New York, N.Y.

2. U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Characteristics of the Population, part 8, Connecticut, table 16, p. 36; table 23, p. 53; table 96, p. 311 (hereafter cited as 1970 Connecticut Census). The white percentage was computed by subtracting the Spanish origin population in table 96 from the total white population in table 23.

3. U.S., Commission on Civil Rights, Counting the Forgotten (April 1974). The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights uses the description "persons of Spanish-speaking background" for Spanish-speaking, Spanish surnamed, and Spanish-speaking background individuals. For brevity and variety, "Hispanic" and "Spanish speaking" are used interchangeably with "of Spanish-speaking background" in this report.

4. 1960 census data provided by Mark Hanson, statistical planner, Stamford, Conn., Planning Board, telephone interview, June 19, 1976 (hereafter cited as Hanson Interview). The planning board did not have data on the number of Spanish-speaking persons in the 1960 census. Although the number of Hispanic persons was probably relatively small, it is included with the total number of white persons in 1960.

5. 1970 Connecticut Census, table 92, p. 284; table 96, p. 326.

6. 1970 Connecticut Census, table 94, p. 295; table 89, p. 260; and table 100, p. 337.

7. Hanson Interview.

8. Dr. Robert W. Peebles, superintendent, Stamford Public Schools, letter to Jacques Wilmore, Director, USCCR Northeastern Regional Office, Dec. 13, 1976, p. 2 (hereafter referred to as Peebles Letter); also Dr. Margaret Toner, director, Special Pupil Services, Stamford Public Schools, staff interview, Mar. 5, 1976.

9. Peebles Letter, p. 2.

10. Allen Grafton, director, School Community Relations, Stamford Public Schools, staff interview, Feb. 9, 1976.

II. HISTORY

The desegregation of the Stamford public schools began in the 1960s with the construction of new schools to meet the needs of the growing student population. The board of education implemented a plan to desegregate the high schools in 1962, the middle schools in 1967 and 1968, and the elementary schools in 1970 and 1972.

Most interviewees agreed that in the 1960s the impetus for desegregation came from the white establishment. At every stage, citizen advisory committees, largely white, were set up. Thomas Mayers, a mayor of Stamford in the 1960s, also fought to desegregate the city's housing patterns by supporting scattered-site public housing. However, the issue was not supported by the majority of the public and Mayor Mayers was defeated in 1968.

High Schools

Prior to 1961 Stamford had only one high school, which served students of all races and ethnic backgrounds. In 1961 a second high school, Rippowam, was opened just north of Stamford High School in the middle section of the city. The board of education drew an east-west line, dividing the city into a northern and a southern section. Students in the northern section were assigned to Rippowam and in the southern section to Stamford High.[1]

The board stated that its districting policy was designed to create a "cross-section of the community's population" at both schools, but no mention was made specifically of creating racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic balance.[2]

Prior to the opening of Rippowam, the Stamford branch of the NAACP recognized the inequity of the districting plan and filed a statement with the board pointing out the inevitable and "harmful" pattern of segregation that would result from an east-west line.[3] Other organizations

including the Catholic Interracial Council and the human relations division of the Stamford Community Council also criticized the districting plan.

When school opened in September 1961, it was apparent that Stamford High School had a disproportionate number of black and Puerto Rican students and that Rippowam was virtually all white, although data by race were not collected. That year, the school board appointed a large citizen advisory committee to study the racial and socioeconomic balance at the two schools. The committee confirmed the racial and socioeconomic imbalance at the two schools (145 of 157 black high school students were at Stamford High) and in a majority report the committee recommended that a north-south district line be established for the two schools.[4]

After continuing discussion, the superintendent established a north-south district line in the fall of 1962 with the specific goal of achieving balances of white and nonwhite students, of students of different socioeconomic backgrounds, and of college- and non-college-bound students. This plan was formally approved by the school board later in the school year and racial balance was achieved at the two high schools.[5]

At the Advisory Committee's informal hearing, school staff reviewed the process of desegregation. "In general, there was not any significant difficulty that occurred because of this [the desegregation of the high schools]," said Eugene Daly, then an assistant superintendent in the school system. "I couldn't believe things could go so well as they did." (p. 37)[6]

Junior High and Middle Schools

In 1965 Stamford had five junior high schools with 80 percent of the black students concentrated at two of the five schools.[7] All five schools contained seventh to ninth grades. Cloonan, a small school with the highest concentration of blacks (61.3 percent), was closed in the 1965-66 school year because the facility was inadequate.[8] As in the case of the high schools, the opening of a new school (the new Cloonan School in the middle of the following school year) precipitated the desegregation of the junior high schools.

In early 1966, the school board, "recognizing the principle that the quality of education of all students is adversely affected when the schools become de facto segregated," asked the administrative staff to develop a junior high school redistricting plan to achieve racial balance. This plan, which was subsequently approved by the board,[9] affected the seventh and eighth grades in 1967 and the ninth grade the following year. By 1968, all five junior high schools had black student populations of between 13 and 18 percent.

With the opening of a third senior high school in 1971, one junior high school was closed and the other four became middle schools (grades seven and eight). Racial balances at these four schools were maintained.

Elementary Schools

In 1965 Stamford had 16 elementary schools. Approximately 70 percent of the black elementary school students were concentrated in 3 of those 16 schools and many of the schools were overcrowded. In 1964 the citywide PTA council issued a report on equal opportunity in the Stamford public schools, and concern in the community over the growing segregation of the schools grew. In 1966 a citizen group issued a broad plan for desegregating the elementary schools.[10]

In the 1966-67 school year, the board of education took its first steps to deal with racial imbalance and overcrowding in the elementary schools and transferred a total of 200 fourth- and fifth-grade students from Rice School, one of the three predominately black schools, to five other schools where black students made up less than 1 percent of the student body.[11]

In November 1967 the board of education adopted a comprehensive plan for desegregating and relieving the overcrowded conditions in the elementary schools.[12] The plan called for ending the regular use of the predominately black inner-city schools and the construction of three new schools, all to be located in the so-called "neutral" or middle area of the city. According to persons interviewed, sites for these new schools were chosen because they were accessible to both Stamford's northern white and southern minority communities. The sites were generally in white, integrated, or changing neighborhoods and therefore avoided

the need to bus white students into all-black neighborhoods. In May 1970, after several delays, the board of education issued an updated plan calling for the desegregation of the elementary schools in two phases.[13]

In September 1970, Phase I went into effect. Rice School, where minority student enrollment at the time was as high as 91 percent, was closed as a regular elementary school and a new school, Toquam, was opened. Toquam received some students from Rice and others from four neighboring schools: Belltown, Newfield, Springdale, and Stark. Students from Rice also were assigned to Murphy, and to those four schools where places had been freed by the creation of the new Toquam attendance area. At these schools, a total of 712 students were bused, of whom 90 percent were black or of Spanish heritage.[14]

At the same time, students from Stevens, another school south of the turnpike, were reassigned to Northeast, Riverbank, Roxbury, and Willard Schools. Approximately 91 percent of the 147 students bused were black or of Spanish background.[15]

In February 1971 the board of education appointed a 15-member citizen advisory committee to evaluate Phase I and make recommendations for Phase II. This committee issued a comprehensive report on changes in racial balance and class size in the Phase I schools and provided data on the attitudes of parents, teachers, and administrators.[16] The report pointed out that the percentage of minority students in the schools varied from 15 to 30 percent and that only two-thirds of the students were in classes with minority student representation within the desirable 3 percentage points of the citywide representation.[17] It also cited many successes growing out of the desegregation plan. For instances, 40 percent of the white parents and 61 percent of the black parents surveyed thought that their children had done better than in the previous year, while only a very small percent of both groups--approximately 12 percent of minority and 16 percent of white parents--thought their children had done less well.[18]

The 17 recommendations issued by the committee included a recommendation for expanded teacher training (92 percent of all teachers interviewed wanted further training for teaching desegregated classes),[19] increased parent and community participation, and increased minority staff.[20]

In 1971 the Stamford Board of Education applied for and received a $115,000 grant under Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to plan and implement Phase II. The original grant proposal was approved by the board of education in February 1971[21] with the assumption that the grant would start on January 1972. However, financial procedures in Stamford require the board of representatives to approve all expenditures, and the board of representatives denied the request for use of the funds in September 1971 and again in February 1972.[22]

Based on a ruling on a technicality by the president of the board of representatives,[23] the board of education began spending the funds in the fall of 1971. Even though the board of representatives had not granted approval, the board appointed a temporary seven-person task force which hired staff and set up a larger advisory task force. The Title IV director and an assistant, whose main role was to work with community groups, began work at the end of 1971. The larger task force of 51 members first met in January of 1972 and five subcommittees (on instructional program, community relations, demography, finance, and buildings) were established. Advisory task force members were given a series of workshops on the decisionmaking process and issues related to desegregation.

In March 1972 the board of representatives finally approved the Federal funds. However, minutes of the meeting indicate that many persons voted for approval only because a substantial portion of the grant had already been spent.[24]

Black participation increased during Phase II. Three of the seven members of the temporary task force and a estimated 15 to 20 percent of the larger advisory task force were black. The Title IV staff assistant also was black.

The advisory task force presented a desegregation plan to the board of education on April 1, 1972.[25] Shortly thereafter, the board held public meetings simultaneously at three schools and several days later conducted a workshop for the administrative staff to discuss the three meetings. A special open meeting was held at the board of education to allow for further community discussion of the plan.[26] The task force's community relations subcommittee also held a number of meetings with groups of parents. Throughout the winter and spring in 1972 the Title IV staff assistant met

with community groups to explain the desegregation process and the proposed plan.[27]

There was little opposition to the plan in either white or black communities. One all-white group, Citizens for Neighborhood Schools, organized around the concept of the neighborhood school and picketed the board of education and West Hill High School when it opened. However, the group of several hundred parents dispersed when Murphy, the predominately white school which many of their children attended, was allowed to remain as a neighborhood school.(p. 136) However, students from the former Ryle and Stevens attendance areas were transferred into the Murphy attendance area.[28]

Several other groups including white and black parents also asked that their previously desegregated schools be excluded from the plan. One board of education member denied that any school was exempted from the plan, but several desegregated schools, including Hart and Springdale, remained largely as neighborhood schools.[29]

The black community was also not united on the issue of desegregation. Many black parents supported desegregation and believed that it would improve the quality of education in the schools. However, a small coalition of black and Spanish-speaking groups developed their own proposal which stressed quality education and community control rather than citywide desegregation.[30] A black group challenged the final Phase II plan that went into effect in September 1972 in Federal district court on the grounds that it placed a disproportionate share of the busing on the black community. The court upheld the school board's plan.[31]

The Phase II plan called for the closing of Stevens School (the second of the three inner-city schools to close) and the opening of the two new schools in the middle section of the city. The third predominately black school, Ryle, was converted into a magnet school with special resources and programs set up in conjunction with the Bank Street College of Education in New York City. Students from Stevens and from the fifth and sixth grades at Ryle were transferred to predominately white schools in the middle and northern sections of the city.

The following November the board of education established racial balance goals for the school system. The

board decided that the following conditions constitute disproportionate percentages of minorities: (1) any school which contains a percentage of minority group students greater than the percentage in the elementary school system as a whole and experiences a 10 percent increase in minority school enrollment; (2) any school which contains a lower percentage of minority group students than the percentage in the elementary schools as a whole and experiences a 10 percent decrease in minority school enrollment; and (3) any school in which, regardless of the above criteria, the percentage of minority group students reaches 60 percent or falls below 20 percent.[32]

Student assignments were made during the spring of 1972, and at most schools students spent 1 day at the school to which they were to be assigned the following school year.

The Institute for the Advancement of Urban Education, a black training and consulting firm from Hartford, was hired to provide inservice training. A series of voluntary workshops were held for teachers of all grade levels in the spring of 1971 and during July and August. This training was criticized by most participants and administrative staff as inadequate. The trainers did not relate well with the Stamford school personnel and only a limited number of teachers (50 to 100) participated in the program.[33] Also, workshops to introduce black history in the elementary school social studies curriculum were given to all elementary teachers in the winter and spring of 1972.

Although there was no comprehensive plan to desegregate the staff, with the closing of Stevens School in the fall of 1972, the black staff from Stevens was reassigned to other schools to create better racially balanced faculties at all schools.[34] However, according to Robert Kelly, a teacher representing BEST (Black Educators of Stamford), a black teachers organization, in 1975 five elementary schools still had no black teachers.[35] In September 1972, when Phase II of the effort to desegregate the elementary schools went into effect, 11 of the 17 schools had between 20 and 38 percent black students.[36]

Methods of Achieving Racial Balance: Past and Future

General

In desegregating its school system, the board of education used several different but related methods. At each educational level the process began with the construction of new schools in the so-called "neutral" area of the city, usually accompanied by the closing of predominately black inner-city schools. The opening of new schools called for redistricting of the school population along with the increased use of busing to transport the students to the newly assigned schools.

Rippowam High School, which opened in 1961, was the first new school to lead to redistricting and resulted in the creation of a racially balanced high school system. Then in 1966, the old Cloonan, a predominately black inner-city middle school, closed and a year and a half later a new Cloonan was opened in the "neutral" area. In 1967 and 1968 the middle schools were redistricted. In 1970 Rice Elementary School was closed and Toquam was opened in the neutral zone. Finally, in 1972 Stevens was closed and Davenport and Stillmeadow were opened.

Busing

Because of the extensive geographic area covered by the city, a large number of students--almost 43.2 percent in 1971--have always been bused in Stamford.[37] Because much of the desegregation effort depended upon closing inner-city elementary schools, the busing directly related to desegregation of elementary school students fell disproportionately upon the inner-city black and Spanish-speaking community.

As cited earlier, approximately 90 percent of the elementary school students bused from Rice and Stevens Schools during Phase I were black. As a result, in 1971 approximately 17.3 percent of all the elementary students bused were black. In 1972, with the closing of Stevens in Phase II and the busing of the students from that predominately black school, the percentage of black students bused out of all the elementary school students bused grew to 30.9 percent.[38]

By 1974, of 4,747 elementary students bused, 1,485 or 31.3 percent were black and 385 or 8.1 percent were Spanish speaking. At that time, 26.1 percent of the elementary student body was black and 6.9 percent was Spanish speaking. Of the total student body bused, 25.5 percent were black and 6.1 percent were Spanish speaking. Approximately 23.2 percent of the student body were black and 5.6 percent were Spanish speaking. Thus, the percentage of minority students bused was less than 3 percentage points higher than their representation in the student body.[39]

Magnet School

At the elementary school level the board of education promoted desegregation by creating a magnet school at Ryle Elementary School with a special program set up by the Bank Street College of Education to attract students throughout the city. In 1972 the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades at Ryle were moved to other schools in the city to make room for students from outside the Ryle attendance area. In 1973, the school was opened on a citywide basis.

In 1971 the school was 76 percent black and 9 percent Spanish-speaking and had the highest percentage of black students in the city. By 1975-76, of 342 children, 163 or 47.7 percent were black, 76 or 22.2 percent were Spanish speaking, and 103 or 30.1 percent were white. About 42 percent, including both white and black students, were from out of the attendance zone, and in the spring of 1976 there was a short waiting list of white students interested in attending.

The Bank Street program provides instruction in basic skills and other subjects through what is described as a "child centered activity approach."[40] Skills are learned and information is taught through a study of the environment. For example, mathematics, English, and social studies may be taught through an examination of a supermarket. Rooms are divided into activity areas--cooking, planting, art, etc. and classes operate on a less structured, informal basis with a high degree of individualized instruction.

In the first year of operation, Bank Street College provided two almost-full-time staff persons, and consultants who worked several days a month. The college now provides six consultant-days a month. The major focus of the Bank Street staff is on training the regular Stamford teachers to

use the methods and approach developed by Bank Street College.

The magnet school has several active parent groups, including a parent-teaching group with black as well as white participation (3 or 4 members of the executive board of 10 to 12 persons are black); a parent volunteer program in which about 35 parents (including 2 fathers), most of them white, work an average of about 3 hours a week; and homeroom mothers.[41]

At the Connecticut Advisory Committee's informal public hearing and in interviews prior to the hearing, many persons were strongly enthusiastic about the school. (pp. 356-74, for a discussion of Ryle School program). Jeanne Carpenter, who heads the parent volunteer program, chooses to bus her children about 45 minutes every day to the school. She supports the school both because of the curriculum developed by the Bank Street College of Education and because of the advantages of a well-integrated multiracial classroom.[42]

Frank Jerabek, the school's principal, said that since Ryle became a magnet school discipline problems have decreased. He suggested that the school was now more successful at meeting the needs of all the students, both the inner-city black and middle-income "suburban" white children.[43]

Maintaining Racial Balance

By 1975 the student population and the racial balance had shifted in many schools. Several elementary schools had a disproportionate number of minority students--Westover was 57.9 percent black and 11 percent Spanish speaking, and Hart was 44.7 percent black and 8.5 percent Spanish speaking--and other schools were suffering from either under- or overutilization. As a result, the board of education was considering both a short-term redistricting plan and the development of a long-range master plan. Of prime consideration in both plans was the proposed closing of Burdick, which was built in 1894 and considered to be an outdated, inadequate facility.

At the time of the informal public hearing, neither the school staff, the board, nor the community agreed on the best solution to either short-term redistricting or the long-term master plan. Many persons agreed that the

original desegregation occurred as easily as it did largely because it depended upon the closing of inner-city schools and did not call for busing white students into predominately black neighborhoods. However, in recent years there has been a growing sentiment in the black community in favor of the inner-city school.

Notes to Chapter II

1. Stamford, Conn., Board of Education, resolution, May 10, 1960 (hereafter cited as Board of Education).

2. Board of Education, minutes, Apr. 12, 1960.

3. "If the proposed districting were allowed to stand, the school population of Rippowam High School would be overwhelmingly white and from economically privileged homes. This is harmful not only to the children who live in the southern part of the city, but equally harmful to children of the northern part of Stamford, for they shall be deprived of the opportunity to develop into fully rounded adults by association with people of diverse background and cultures." National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Stamford branch, statement submitted to the Board of Education, June 29, 1961.

4. Stamford, Conn., Citizens Advisory Committee for the Districting of the Senior High Schools, report (1962).

5. Board of Education, resolution, Mar. 12, 1963.

6. Page numbers in parentheses cited here and hereafter in this report refer to statements made to the Connecticut Advisory Committee during its informal public hearing in Stamford, Conn., Apr. 29, 1976, as recorded in the transcript of that hearing. The transcript is available for review in the Stamford Public Library and in the Commission's Northeastern Regional Office, New York, N.Y.

7. The percentage of black student population of the five schools was as follows: Burdick; 25.9 percent; Cloonan, 61.3 percent; Dolan, 3.8 percent; Rogers, 8.6 percent; and Turn of the River, 0.4 percent. Board of Education, "Summary of Pupil Racial Background Survey," Sept. 15, 1965.

8. In 1965 Cloonan did not exist physically as a school. It was an administrative unit but the former building had

been closed and the student body was accommodated at a number of locations. Dr. Robert W. Peebles, superintendent, Stamford Pupil Schools, letter to Jacques Wilmore, Director, USCCR Northeastern Regional Office, Dec. 13, 1976, p. 2 (hereafter cited as Peebles Letter).

9. Board of Education, minutes, May 10, 1966.

10. Stamford, Conn., PTA Council, "Educational Opportunity in the Stamford Public Schools," (1964); "An Analysis of Defacto Segregation in the Stamford Public Elementary Schools and Suggestions for Community Action" (June 1966).

11. The five were Newfield, Northeast, Roxbury, Springdale, and Willard Elementary Schools.

12. Board of Education, resolution, Nov. 18, 1967.

13. Board of Education, recommendations, May 26, 1970.

14. Moss et al v. Stamford Board of Education, 356 F. Supp. 675 (1973) (hereafter cited as Moss v. Bd. of Ed.)

15. Ibid.

16. Board of Education, "Report of the Committee to Evaluate Phase I of Elementary Integration to the Board of Education" (September 1971).

17. Ibid., p. 11.

18. Ibid., p. 13.

19. Ibid., p. 17.

20. Ibid., pp. 2-5.

21. Board of Education, minutes, Feb. 27, 1971.

22. Stamford, Conn., Board of Representatives, minutes, Mar. 6, 1972.

23. Ibid. Also, Marilyn Laitman, then a member of the board of representatives, testified that she had lobbied for approval of the bill and that in a very "emotional" setting, she had argued that if the city were going to desegregate,

the city rather than the courts should control the process (Transcript, pp. 113-114).

24. Ibid.

25. Stamford, Conn., Advisory Task Force to the Board of Education, "Elementary School Desegregation Plan," submitted to the Board of Education, Apr. 1, 1972.

26. Board of Education, "Final Evaluation Report of a Program for In-service Training and a Total Desegregation of its School System in Stamford, Connecticut, June 1, 1971, to Feb. 28, 1973," by Stanley H. Kornhauser, p. 4.

27. Audry Smith Ferguson, director, Coleman Towers Day Care Center, and former Title IV staff member, Stamford Public Schools, staff interview, Stamford, Conn., Mar. 18, 1976 (hereafter cited as Ferguson Interview).

28. Peeples Letter, p. 3.

29. Elahan Stone, Stamford school board member, staff interview, New York City, Apr. 12, 1976.

30. The Coalition of Black and Spanish Speaking People, "The COBAS Plan to Attain High Academic Achievement for Students of the Stamford School System," presented to the Stamford Board of Education, Oct. 26, 1970.

31. Moss v. Bd. of Ed.

32. Board of Education, statement, Nov. 27, 1972.

33. Ferguson Interview; Dr. Stnaley Kornhauser, former director, Title IV program, Stamford Public Schools, staff interview, New York City, Mar. 19, 1976.

34. John J. Morris, assistant superintendent in charge of personnel, Stamford Public Schools, staff interview, Stamford, Conn., Mar. 5, 1976.

35. Robert Kelly, teacher, Stamford Public Schools, staff interview, Stamford, Conn., Feb. 17, 1976.

36. Peebles Letter, p. 3.

37. Statistics provided by John Downey, director of transportation, Stamford Public Schools, staff interview, Stamford, Conn., Feb. 27, 1976.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Elaine Wickens, director, Ryle School project of Bank Street College of Education, staff interview, Stamford, Conn., Mar. 18, 1976.

41. Jeanne Carpenter, head of parent volunteer program at Ryle School, staff interview, Stamford, Conn., Mar. 18, 1976 (hereafter cited as Carpenter Interview).

42. Carpenter Interview.

43. Frank Jerabek, principal, Ryle School, staff interview, Stamford, Conn., Mar. 18, 1976.

III. CURRENT ISSUES RELATED TO DESEGREGATION

The Advisory Committee believes that desegregation does not stop after the physical reassignment of students to achieve racial balance in the classroom. Rather, it calls for a continuing creative and energetic approach to education in order to reduce racial isolation and racial tension in the schools and create an environment where equal education is a reality for all.

As the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights studied the desegregation process in selected school districts across the country, the Commission stressed certain factors such as adequate minority representation on the administrative and teaching staff, minority and nonminority parent participation in the school system, curriculum modifications related to the multiethnic classroom, and issues such as student discipline, achievement, and attitudes. Many of these issues were raised at the informal public hearing and in interviews prior to it.

Staff

Black and Spanish-speaking staff are seriously underrepresented in almost all aspects of the Stamford school system. In 1975, 76 or 5.5 percent of the 1,388 teachers were black and 17 or 1.2 percent of the teachers were of Spanish origin. About 6.7 percent of the faculty were minority in a school system where more than 30 percent of the students were minority.

As indicated in table F, between 1971 and 1975 the number of black staff grew from 65 to 76, and Spanish-speaking staff from 2 to 17. A significant number (eight) of the new minority staff members were hired when the school system established a bilingual program in 1972 and expanded that program through Federal funds in 1974.

Minorities are also underrepresented in staffing areas of particular importance to minority students. In the

spring of 1976, of 20 social workers only 3 (15 percent) were black. Of 14 psychologists, only 1 was black, and of 56 special education teachers, none were black. Of 124 special education staff, 15 (12 percent) were black; 4 (3.2 percent) were Spanish speaking--2 social worker aides and 2 attendance supervisors. Of 48 counselors, 3 (6 percent) were black and none were Spanish speaking.

Minorities were also underrepresented at the administrative level. Although one high school principal and one middle school principal were black, no elementary school principals were black and none were of Spanish origin. In the central administration, there was only one black person, the administrative assistant to the personnel director.

The underrepresentation was strongly criticized by both black and white members of the community, school staff, and the student body. Many persons said that more minority staff members were necessary both to provide role models for the minority students and to overcome problems of communication which some of the white staff were said to have in teaching minority students. Robert Kelly, a teacher representing a black teacher organization called BEST (Black Educators of Stamford), said:

> There is a very, very great disparity in the proportion of minority teachers in the system....There are about five schools where there are no minority teachers and as a result the minority kids who go there have no role model and the white students are deprived of that kind of contact with another culture (pp. 286-87).[1]

A black student at West Hill High School said:

> Black and Puerto Rican students feel that they can relate to somebody who is either black or Puerto Rican. The majority of the teachers in the school are white and they...don't know what it's like to be living in a certain neighborhood.(pp. 222-23)

When asked whether there were many teachers to whom he could relate, he replied:

TABLE F

PROFESSIONAL STAFF BY RACE/ETHNICITY: 1971-1975

Stamford Public Schools

Year	American Indian	Black	Oriental	Spanish	New Hires Minority
1971-72	1	65	1	2	8
1972-73	0	68	0	7	8
1973-74	0	72	1	8	9
1974-75	0	81	1	15	18
1975-76	0	76	0	17	3

Source: Stamford Public Schools

> Just a few. There's a few teachers in the school that I can talk to. You know, not very many. Because the majority of the teachers, they don't want to spend the time, or if you talk to them, they wouldn't know what you are talking about in the first place. (p. 223)

A Hispanic student at West Hill High School criticized the lack of Spanish-speaking staff. She described the following advantage of having Spanish-speaking teachers in the regular classroom:

> There's one Cuban teacher. He's the only Spanish teacher that teaches something other than Spanish. I've talked to a lot of Spanish-speaking students in his class that have changed from different science classes into his science class because they get along with him better. He can explain things to them better either in their own languages or it's just that they can talk to him and they feel that he really understands them.(p. 223)

According to James Morris, the assistant superintendent in charge of personnel, until recent budget cuts the school system had an extensive minority recruitment program. This program, funded from $600 to $2,000 annually, has included advertising in minority publications and other publications which advertise available jobs as well as visits by white and black staff to both New York City and black southern colleges. Mr. Morris said that when he tried to set up appointments with black students at New York University, not one black student signed up to see him.[2]

In 1972, through a student teacher program with Norfolk (Virginia) State Teachers College, approximately 10 to 12 black student teachers taught in the Stamford schools for 10 weeks. According to Mr. Morris, the program was discontinued because it failed to draw minority teachers on a permanent basis. He said that be believed that a lack of housing and Stamford's northern climate kept minority teachers from applying. (p. 443)

Nellie Spears, the only black professional in the central administration and administrative assistant to the personnel director, said that many well-qualified blacks

whom she had interviewed were interested in coming to Stamford. However, they had not been hired.(pp. 398-99)

Other persons suggested that the system's failure to promote minorities within the system served as a deterrent to minority applicants. Robert Kelly, a teacher representing BEST, said:

> I don't think that minority teachers have been encouraged to pursue this area [promotions]...They feel a sense of waste of money to pursue higher advanced courses for administration when they know what's happening. They don't expect to get any place in Stamford.(pp. 301-02)

In the 1975-76 school year, the board of education took several steps to increase minority staff. In the winter the board passed a policy statement of equal opportunity in the hiring and promotion of all staff. At the time of the informal public hearing in April, the board had approved an affirmative action policy and was considering written administrative guidelines to implement the policy.(pp. 414-15)

An affirmative action plan approved by the board of education was submitted to the Advisory Committee early in July. The plan includes a policy statement of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action for minorities and women. It assigns overall responsibility for affirmative action to the superintendent and his affirmative action officer and calls for the following: the dissemination of the plan within and outside the school system; a nondiscrimination clause in all union contracts; a job analysis of current staff and the establishment of goals and timetables for the hiring of minorities and women; expanded efforts to recruit and provide upward mobility for minorities and women; an analysis of job qualifications and examinations to determine which ones screen out a disproportionate number of minorities and women and a review of those requirements and examinations to determine whether they are job related; and several other steps related to affirmative action.[3]

The Advisory Committee noted that, although the plan calls for the establishment of goals and timetables for the employment of minorities and women at all job levels, it

does not clearly define how those goals should be determined. The plan calls for recruitment of minorities and women outside of the immediate geographic area (the personnel department in the past has recruited at black southern colleges); however, the plan suggests that "the availability of potential minority and women employees in the work force should be the basis for the goals." The plan proposes that "the total minority and female population in metropolitan Stamford, the unemployment figures in that area, and the percentage of minorities and women in this area with requisite skills and/or professional training" [emphasis added] should be considered.[4] The Advisory Committee believes that the percentage of minority students in the school system--which is more than 20 percent higher than the minority labor force--and the availability of minority and female staff in surrounding urban areas such as New York City and nationwide should be incorporated into the school system's goals and timetables.

In a July 9, 1976, letter to Ellen Camhi, school board president, Jacques E. Wilmore, Director of the Northeastern Regional Office of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, suggested that a formula to develop goals take into account the following factors: (1) the percent of minorities and women in the total population of Stamford; (2) the percent of minorities and women with the requisite skills and professional training in the Nation as a whole; and (3) the percent of minorities and females in the student population of the school system. Mr. Wilmore also stated in his letter that a timeframe should be established. He said that it would be necessary to set a percentage of new hires in each year to be filled by minorities and women to ensure that overall goals are met at the end of the time period.[5]

The plan established June 30, 1976, as a target date (which was not met) to develop goals and timetables, but no other timetables were set.[6] The Advisory Committee believes that timetables other than the annual April 30 report to the board of education should be established.

Superintendent Peebles differed with the Advisory Committee on the matter of goals. He said:

> It is my belief that we have a chance of increasing minority staff more significantly if we do not provide specific goals. Goals can be limiting, controversial, and counterproductive. The question primarily deals with commitment and the record is already indicative of the commitment.[7]

In December 1976 Superintendent Peebles reported to the Advisory Committee that the affirmative action efforts of the school system were producing real progress. In 1976, according to Superintendent Peebles, black and Spanish-speaking persons accounted for 27 percent of the new hires, as compared to 3 percent in the previous year. In addition, between 30 and 50 interns from the College of the City of New York will be working in the Stamford school system in the second semester of the 1976-77 school year.[8]

Curriculum and Educational Programs

The Advisory Committee did not conduct a comprehensive review or evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and educational programs in the Stamford public schools. However, during the investigation, school staff, parents, students, and members of the community raised questions in the following areas: ability grouping in the general educational program, special education and the alternate high school, bilingual education, and multiethnic curriculum.

Ability Grouping

Ability grouping is used to varying degrees at different educational levels in the Stamford public schools. It was discussed at length at the informal public hearing because of its tendency to resegregate the classrooms with the middle- and high-income white students in the higher groups and the low-income black and Hispanic students in the lower groups.

With minor exceptions, there is no ability grouping at the elementary school level. The board of education formally established a policy of heterogeneous grouping with individualized instruction in all classes and implemented this policy in the fall of 1972.[9] Students of different ability levels are grouped together, and in some instances progress toward real integration has been achieved.[10]

When the middle schools desegregated, the Cooperating Groups System (COGS)--in which about 100 students of all ability levels work with a core group of teachers--replaced a system in which students were assigned to 1 of 15 groups according to their ability.[11](p. 459) However, within each COG unit, students are assigned to one of four groups according to ability for all academic courses. The upper cooperating groups are predominately white and the lower ones are predominately black, thus segregating the classes. Some middle schools are experimenting in heterogeneous grouping for certain courses within the COG.

At the high school level where students are grouped according to ability for English and social studies (the two required classes), the same segregation occurs as in the middle schools. The remaining courses are also segregated as students elect their own subjects--the higher achievers take calculus and the lower achievers take vocational education courses.(p. 459)

Students, parents, and school staff differ in their views on ability grouping. Generally, parents support heterogeneous grouping with individualized instruction in the lower grades, and many favor it for the nonbasic skill courses in the upper grades.[12]

Marilyn Laitman, a member of the board of finance and a white mother who is a strong advocate of desegregation, argued for ability grouping for the basic skills: "It would be a very frustrating experience for her [Mrs. Laitman's daughter] to be constantly stymied by the skills and abilities of her peers. I'd rather have her be comfortable in the situation and get the kind of attention she needs."(p. 101) The possibility of expanded heterogeneous grouping at the middle level, she said, was a "key concern" causing white parents to take their children out of the public school system.(p. 133)

Charles Ukkerd, director of the Yerwood Community Center and a black parent, made a strong argument for heterogeneous grouping at all levels:

> We don't have in our society everybody with the same background, same education, etc. In church, in your family, regardless of where it is, you learn from one another. If the school system has what is known as

> individualized instruction, what the devil difference does it make if there is a kid in the class with a higher IQ than the other. It brings more learning to the situation.
>
> There are other factors of learning how to live with people, how to live in this society, which are just so important. So I would feel that heterogeneous grouping is by far the more preferable between the two. I think there are lots of statistics that indicate also that learning can take place, and just as good learning can take place, under heterogeneous grouping. (pp. 193-94)

A white mother whose son was in a predominately black lower group also supported heterogeneous grouping.[13]

Students also differed on the issue. A white student at Rippowam supported homogeneous grouping on the grounds that students learn at different rates. (p. 262)

However, a black student at West Hill strongly criticized the grouping system. He said that the grouping system "makes them [blacks] feel like they are lower and then that builds to be a hatred of white people in general." (p. 213) Several black and Hispanic students said that students in the lower groups received less attention and assistance than those in the upper grades. One black student said:

> Nobody [in the lower groups] is going to help you out. There's nobody down there to push you...I know, I've been there...when the teachers should be pushing them, they aren't doing their job. They're just getting their checks. (p. 244)

Several students said that they thought that the better teachers were assigned to the higher groups. (p. 213) A black student said:

> Your teachers in the lower group...are put there just to make sure you don't do anything in class. You sit for a couple of hours and that's it. The teachers in the II and I groups, at least the ones I have, they make

> you want to learn and they show interest. The teachers in the lower class don't show any kind of interest. (p. 213)

Edward Friedlander, director of testing and guidance in the school system, said:

> We seem to be doing a very effective job at the elementary school with the individualized instruction approach that gets away from those kinds of things [tracking]. The problem with that is that it's very expensive and requires a significant support on the part of the board of education....
>
> It would seem to me that the instructional advantages of homogeneous grouping do not outweigh the other issues in terms of student development and student activities....
>
> ...my personal and professional opinion is to favor the heterogeneous approach as being more appropriate to meet all of the needs of the student, which include not only academic but psychological and social. (p. 350)

Superintendent Peebles called for a flexible approach to grouping and suggested that with proper planning "homogeneous arrangements within a heterogeneous classroom" could be achieved. (p. 457)

Special Education and the Alternate High School

The Stamford school system has a number of special education programs, including programs for the mentally retarded and the emotionally disturbed, and an alternate high school. There are also remedial and other programs in which students return to the regular classrooms. These remedial programs include those given by speech and hearing and learning disability staff and teachers who operate from what is called a "resource room" in each school.[14]

As indicated in table G, the school system has almost doubled many of its special education resources since 1967. The number of psychologists has grown from 9 to 16; speech and hearing teachers, from 8 to 16.

All 21 resource room teachers have been hired since then. At the same time, the number of classes for the educable mentally retarded has been decreased.

In March 1976 minority students were disproportionately represented in almost all special education classes. The one exception was classes for the severely mentally retarded or "trainable" students. Table H indicates that black students were represented far above their percentage in the population in the classes for the educable mentally retarded, in the diagnostic classes for elementary school students with emotional or learning difficulties, and in classes for the emotionally handicapped (traditionally a dumping ground for students with discipline problems).

Although the Advisory Committee did not investigate these programs, it received information from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), which on March 10, 1976, informed the board of education of a wide range of deficiencies.[15](pp. 375-88) In this area, violations of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act cited by HEW include the following:

> 1 - Failure to implement uniform, non-discriminatory criteria for the referral of students for identification and placement in Special Education Programs.
>
> 2 - Failure to adopt and implement uniform procedures for insuring that children, and their parents or guardians, are guaranteed procedural safeguards in decisions regarding identification, evaluation, and educational placement including, but not limited to, the following:
>
> > (a) Written and oral notices to parents or guardians in their language whenever the local education agency proposes to change the educational placement of the child, including a full explanation of the nature and implications of such proposed change.

TABLE G

SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF: 1967-1975

Stamford Public Schools

Program Staff	1967-68	1975-76
psychologists	9	15
speech and hearing teachers	8	16
learning disability teachers	2	5
resource room teachers	0	21
teachers for the emotionally disturbed	3	6
teachers for educable classes	16	9
teachers for trainable classes	5	9
social workers	13	14

Source: Stamford Public Schools

TABLE H

PERCENT MINORITY STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSES: 1976

Stamford Public Schools

Type of Class	No. of Classes	% Minority Students
Diagnostic		
6 classes	2	100%
	1	71.5
	1	60
	1	0
	1	25
Emotionally Handicapped		
9 classes	5	100
	1	80
	1	77.7
	1	62.5
	1	71.5
Project Talk		
1 class	1	55
Educable Mentally Retarded		
8 classes	3	100
	1	70
	1	63
	1	62
	1	40
	1	42
Learning Disabilities		
6 classes	1	100
	1	87
	1	85
	2	66
	1	50
Trainable Mentally Retarded		
8 classes	1	100
	1	13
	1	14.3
	1	14.6
	1	25
	1	60
	2	43
Learning Assistance Program		
Rippowan High School		
4 classes	Grade 9	No racial identification for these children in grades 9 and 10.
	Grade 10	
	Grade 11	66% White
	Grade 12	57% Black

Source: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

(b) Procedures to insure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, exceptional children are educated with children who are not exceptional and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of exceptional children from the regular education environment occur only when the nature or severity of the exceptionality is such, that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aides and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

3 - Failure to adopt and implement procedures to insure that test materials and other assessment devices used to identify, classify, and place exceptional children are selected or administered in a manner which is non-discriminatory in its impact on children of any race, color, or national origin.

4 - Failure to assess individually each student's needs in order to assign her or him to a program designed to meet those individually identified needs.

5 - Failure to adopt and implement uniform procedures with respect to the comprehensive re-evaluation at least once a year of students participating in special education programs.

6 - Failure to take steps to assure that the special education program will be equally effective for children of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

7 - Failure to meet State requirements for the provision of special education services to all children in need of such services, including but not limited to, the following:

(a) Failure to establish procedures for studying the total school population so that all children (handicapped and gifted), who may require special education will be identified and studied to the extent necessary to determine whether they should have a special education program.

(b) Failure to include in the evaluative study, data reports concerning the child's developmental and social history, his/her educational progress, and the psychological and medical evaluations appropriate for determining the nature and scope of his/her handicap and condition.

(c) Failure to review, at least annually, the progress of each handicapped child receiving special education and to study all information relevant to the continued placement of the child in a special education program.

(d) Failure to inform parents, whenever a child requires a program, of the nature of the child's exceptionality, the purposes and scope of the proposed special education program, and the child's progress in such program.

HEW also charged that 29 out of 42 classes were racially isolated and/or racially identifiable as shown by table H.

In a review of 37 folders of students in special education classes (8 Hispanic, 16 black, and 13 white), HEW found a series of specific violations including a failure to include the referral data on 30 of the 37 folders, a failure to give the reasons for referral in 26 of the 37 folders, and the placement of students without either adequate testing, complete medical evaluations, or social worker reports.[16]

At the time of the hearing, the board of education had submitted a plan, which HEW approved, to correct the deficiencies. (p. 387)

The alternate high school is a program for students who have difficulty in the regular high school and are considered to be potential dropouts. It is located in one of the former inner-city elementary schools closed as a result of the desegregation plan. In April 1976, of 67 students, 51 (76.1 percent) were black, 13 (19.4 percent) were white, and 3 (4.8 percent) were Spanish speaking. The school had seven teachers and five teachers' aides, of whom one teacher and one aide were minority. (p. 318)

Michael Intrieri, director of the school, and other school staff members recognize that the alternate high school has been considered a dumping ground for minority students who are discipline problems.[17] However, Mr. Intrieri said, these charges were unfounded and that the smaller class size and individualized instruction at the school enabled the students who were unable to cope in a regular school environment to progress and develop. (pp. 314-16)

The Advisory Committee, which did not do a comprehensive review of the alternate high school, received conflicting testimony about the school from the black community. John Brown, director of Stamford's community action agency, said that the school was "of concern" and was "viewed by many as a situation of de facto segregation." (p. 159) Charles Ukkerd, director of the Yerwood Community Center, said that he had recently talked with students at the school and was now convinced that it was meeting their needs to a greater degree than the regular high schools. (pp. 163-64)

Bilingual Education

In 1975-76 the Stamford school system offered a bilingual program for approximately 140 students at 4 elementary schools. The program, in its fourth year of operation, was funded through $74,112 of local funds and $101,000 of Federal funds. Students in the program have all their academic classes with bilingual instruction. They join the regular classes for music, art, and physical education, field trips, and special events. Of eight teachers in the program, seven were of Spanish-speaking

background.[18] At all levels, the school system has English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for Spanish-speaking and other non-English-speaking students.

The Advisory Committee did not conduct a thorough review of these programs. However, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, in its letter of March 10, 1976, informed the board of education of the following deficiencies in the bilingual program:

> 1. a failure to adequately assess the linguistic proficiency of students whose primary or home language is other than English;
>
> 2. a failure to provide educational services to children identified in the compliance form as having a primary or home language other than English.
>
> 3. students are kept progressing at their grade level in subjects other than English until English language ability is acquired; and
>
> 3a. failure to provide instructional materials designed specifically for the types of students reported under Item 1; whose primary or home language is other than English.[19]

Carmen Castro, director of the Spanish International Center, criticized the elementary school bilingual program as "overcrowded, yearly relocated, scattered, and the last to be serviced by the school system."(p. 172) Because of these programs, she said, the Spanish-speaking community is "at the bottom of the ladder" in the school system.(p. 186)

A Spanish-speaking background student at West Hill High School criticized the high school for not having a bilingual program. She described the following problem with the ESL program:

> There's only one ESL class in the school and that's where they have students that come from different countries, whether they speak Spanish or

> French or anything, they put them in that class....It is effective in a way. But a bilingual program would be much more effective....In there by themselves, they can just speak to each other a little bit and the teacher does most of the talking. (pp. 219-20)

Multiethnic Curriculum

Black history has been offered in the high schools as an elective course and black history resources have been made available to the middle school social studies teachers since the 1960s.

In 1973-74 a formal program specifically designed for the multiracial classroom was introduced into the elementary schools. Several 1-day mandatory workshops were given to all elementary school teachers on the program which incorporated black history and cultural pluralism into the regular social studies class. After attending the workshop, teachers began using the materials with regular assistance from a team of four teacher trainers. In 1974 the workshop on the new social studies was included in the mandatory training required for all new teachers in the system.[20] No attempt was made to evaluate the success of any of these programs.

Student-Related Issues

Discipline

Most school officials, parents, and students agreed that discipline was a continuing problem in the schools, but no more so than in other urban schools. (p. 449) The problems were the greatest at the middle and high school levels. At some schools, racial tension intensified normal student disruptiveness to a greater degree than at others.

Students may be suspended for a number of reasons, including physical assault, theft, the use of obscene language, blackmailing, threatening or intimidating school staff, possession of drugs or alcohol, and the destruction of school property. The list of infractions leading to suspension and the procedures to

be followed are a part of written school policy,[21] which is made available to all students.

In recent years a disproportionate number of minority students have been suspended. In 1974-75, of 469 students suspended, 252 (53.7 percent) were black, 29 (6.2 percent) were Spanish speaking, and the remainder were white. The minority suspension rate was 60 percent, double the minority representation in the student body. Table I shows that the minority suspension rate has been 60 percent or higher since 1972.

John Brown, director of Stamford's community action agency, expressed concern over the high proportion of minority students suspended.(p. 158) However, students interviewed did not criticize the suspension process. At the informal public hearing, two high school students, one black and one white, said that they did not believe students were suspended unfairly.(pp. 208-09)

General discipline is a more complex issue--with no answers or consensus among people interviewed. Most persons agreed that the disruptions in the schools stemmed from a variety of factors including normal student behavioral problems, the wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds among the students, failure of staff-student communication, general socioeconomic problems of society, and in some instances racial tension.(pp. 255, 260, 449)

Students and teachers differed about whether black and white students were treated equally in daily disciplinary procedures. Several students, both black and white, said that the black students were treated less severely than white students.(pp. 225, 228, 259) One student placed the problem in the following perspective:

> Basically a teacher doesn't want people to feel that they're treating the white kids better than the black kids and they overdo it to the point where they let the blacks get away with so much and the white kids get away with so little that it makes the white kids mad. But then you get a teacher who says,

> "Well, I'm not going to let these black kids get away with nothing on me"...and its just reverse and the black students get mad.(p. 228)

On the other hand, reports were received of teachers with racist attitudes who were quick to react to minor misconduct by black students. Perhaps more important was the indication that some white teachers, because of their unfamiliarity with the background of poor black and Spanish-speaking students, failed to communicate with and understand them, and thereby set the stage for later discipline problems.

Several persons, including students and teachers, said that they thought the existing discipline codes should be enforced to a greater degree.(pp. 210-11)

Students at West Hill High School said that the student liaison committee was working to develop an inschool suspension program under which students who committed violations which previously would have called for their suspension would be assigned to a special program at the high school. The students said they thought the inschool suspension program would be more effective in curbing disruptions by those who sought suspensions in order to avoid studying and attending school.[22]

Subsequent to the informal hearing Superintendent Peebles informed the Advisory Committee of new procedures relating to discipline problems:

> Since your review of our school system, each of the three high schools has established a program to deal with students who have recurring disciplinary problems. The high schools refer to these programs as pupil adjustment and learning counseling centers. Students assigned to such centers receive personal counseling and have their programs reviewed in order to overcome some of the difficulties being experienced. Following such activities, students are then assigned to regular classes.[23]

TABLE I

STUDENTS SUSPENDED BY RACE/ETHNICITY: 1972-1975

Stamford Public Schools

Year	Total	White	Black	Spanish Surnamed	Other	% Minority
1975-76 (Sept.-Jan. 31, 1976)	311	95	201	15	0	69%
1974-75	469	188	252	29	0	60
1973-74	455	177	246	32	0	61
1972-73	410	142	244	23	1	65

Source: Stamford Public Schools

Racial Tension

Of Stamford's three high schools, West Hill High School has had the greatest number of incidents which have been interpreted as racial. When the school opened in 1972, several incidents occurred that were caused in part by inadequate planning and problems with the school's physical layout.(p. 253) Since then, the school has been considered to have "racial" problems; however, students at the school said that they thought that the press had exaggerated the difficulties and "distorted" events at the school.(p. 205)

There was a series of minor disturbances again in the fall of 1975. At the informal public hearing, students gave varying interpretations to the events. One white student said that overcrowded buses, not racial tension, was the cause.(pp. 202-03) He explained the "racial" overtones as follows:

> As far as I knew there was only one incident where a black student got arrested and a white didn't. It seemed to me that there was a fight. One student was black and one student was white. A police officer broke it up and the students were given the opportunity to either go to the administration and talk to the administration about it or be arrested. The black student chose to be arrested and the white student chose to go to the administration.
>
> ...I don't really feel it was a racial conflict.(p. 203)

A Spanish-speaking student at the school said that she thought "racial conflict" was behind the disturbances.(p. 204) She described an incident on a bus:

> I know of a girl. She's Spanish and the Spanish people tend to lean more to the black side, because I guess it's just that they feel they are treated in the same way....On the bus there was a fight and it was because a girl was speaking in Spanish. These buses were so crowded, I guess that started it too. Everybody was mad because they had to push

> and shove on the bus. And this guy just says, "Don't speak in Spanish on the bus." So she did and she got beat up by five or six white guys. (p. 204)

At the other two schools, students and staff said that, although there was no overt racial conflict, underlying prejudice still existed. A black student at Stamford High School said:

> At Stamford High, people just respect each other and that's as far as it goes. I think there's a lot of other prejudice feelings underneath that I see and just as long as they're not coming out it's a good feeling....[But] underneath prejudice feelings have to be dealt with. (p. 254)

Although parents, staff, and students interviewed generally did not feel that racism was a serious problem in the schools, several persons described specific incidents or criticized individual teachers for "racist" attitudes. One person said that racist jokes were told by one teacher at a school. A more subtle, equally dangerous form of racism was described as active in those situations where methods and materials of instruction do not always provide the necessary role model for black students. Teachers would refer to white but not minority persons in history, social studies, or current events classes or put up drawings or photos of white but not minority persons on bulletin boards and in exhibit areas. Because of the underrepresentation of black staff in the school system, the importance of establishing black role models through the educational process was considered to be particularly important.

Elaine Wickens, director of the Bank Street College of Education project at Ryle School, made the strongest charges of racism in the school system. However, she said these attitudes, which generally do not take the form of overt racism, are similar--no better and no worse--to those of most teachers in school systems in the country.[24]

Pauline Rauh, coordinator for staff development, said that improving attitudes was a "major emphasis" in the staff development program. (p. 340) She said:

> My observations have been that...[there] perhaps has been a lack of awareness on the part of staff...You can have the skills of instruction but if you cannot reach that youngster, understand his or her background, his needs and where he is as a part of society, then I think we have failed. (p. 340)

Dr. Margaret Toner, director of special student services for the school system, admitted that racism was a problem. In response to a question on the degree of racism in the school system, she said:

> I think that it is just common knowledge among all of us that in a system the size of Stamford and in an urban suburban community...there are certainly going to be mixed kinds of attitudinal stimulus on the part of the staff and I think that Stamford isn't any exception. And, I think that people who are in key positions and who have the opportunity...to work with staffs of people and to recognize the strengths and the weaknesses of staff in connection with this are making a very strong effort to strengthen ourselves in this area. I have had considerable tenure myself in the school system and in this city and I really do see a progression of improved attitudes in our system. (pp. 338-39)

Student Achievement and Quality of Education

Because the board of education changed the elementary school basic skills tests in 1972, and the aptitude test in 1974, it is difficult to measure the change in test scores since desegregation of the elementary schools. According to Edward Friedlander, director of testing and guidance, a comparison of achievement scores indicated that students scored slightly lower in 1972 than in 1971. He said, however, that a comparison of the two tests (the Metropolitan Achievement Test was replaced by the Iowa Basic Skills Test) may be misleading because the Iowa test scores were "inflated."[25]

Between 1971 and 1972, the range in the mean scores of the different schools narrowed for all grade levels. The

narrowing of the mean scores of individual schools is consistent with the assignment of students with a greater range in ability to each school and does not mean, as frequently interpreted, that students are doing less well.[26] Throughout this period the citywide average remained above the national average.

The Advisory Committee did not attempt to review the quality of education in the Stamford public schools, but did receive information on how students, parents, and teachers viewed the quality of education, particularly as a result of desegregation.

A citizen report on Phase I of the desegregation of the elementary schools indicated that in 1971 the majority of parents surveyed had a very positive view toward the school system and toward desegregation. Five percent of the parents thought that their children's education was superior, 44 percent thought it very good, and 34 percent good. The remainder thought it passable or poor or did not answer the question.[27] As stated earlier, 46 percent of all parents interviewed (and 61 percent of minority parents) thought that their children had done better in the first year of Phase I than in the previous year.[28] Testimony at the public hearing and in interviews prior to the hearing indicated that many parents and staff were strong supporters of the desegregated school system.

At the informal public hearing, school department staff described the educational advantages of desegregation which occur regardless of achievement scores. Eugene Daly, a former assistant superintendent in the school system, said, "There are things you can't weigh in tests. You can't weigh attitude. You can't weigh a youngster's ability to use a dictionary."(pp. 37-38)

Dr. Thomas Reardon, assistant superintendent in charge of instruction, said:

> I personally can say from observation and from many other facts that the integration-desegregation program has improved the quality of education in Stamford significantly and it's contributed to the good racial relationship and harmony in the city itself.(p. 448)

Superintendent Peebles and Ellen Camhi, president of the board of education, also said that they believed the effect of desegregation was very positive. Mrs. Camhi added that she believed it had improved the quality of the teaching in the classroom. (pp. 443-45)

Many parents and students interviewed also supported the desegregated school system. Jeanne Carpenter, who chooses to bus her two elementary school students for 45 minutes to attend the predominately black Ryle magnet school, described how that school had helped her children's attitudes on race:

> My daughter had been to an all-white nursery school and to a kindergarten where the black children were bused in and it made her think of them as being different...so when we heard about a public school in Stamford that had a type of educational program which we think is very, very good, we investigated that, and since my daughter has been to that school I have seen her come around 100 percent. She never refers to race, ever. If she talks about the children in her classroom, she simply names them. (p. 115)

A black high school student described the advantages of desegregation as follows:

> Now I feel that students should be integrated, you know because most parents give their children, maybe unconsciously, but they do give their children a fixed--like an outline of people. Like black people all take drugs and hang out in the streets and rob your house and everything. And you won't know any different. You won't know about people until you mix with them. And I think school is really where people get together and people mix, and I'd rather go to an integrated school than an all-black school. (p. 232)

All persons interviewed were not in favor of desegregation. Nicholas Fortunato, the founder of Citizens for a Neighborhood School (the only group opposing the 1972 elementary school desegregation plan), said he was not happy

with the school system and that discipline was poorly maintained.[29](p. 139)

A black student said that he preferred going to all-black schools as he had at the elementary school level because he did better when competing with black students.(pp. 230-32)

Parent Participation

High Schools

There are no formally organized parent groups in the high schools. Persons interviewed said that there is very little parent participation at that level.

Middle and Elementary Schools

Every middle and elementary school has a parent group. The activities and degree of involvement vary from school to school. Some schools have parent-teacher associations (PTA) formally associated with a statewide PTA organization. Other schools have parent-teacher organizations (PTO) which disassociated themselves from the statewide organization because the member parents felt they were not "getting enough in return" for their dues.[30]

The Stamford Parent-Teachers Council is a citywide group of approximately 150 persons. Members include the PTA/O (parent teacher association or organization) president and five delegates from each school, and interested principals. The council is headed by a nine-member board of directors. The only black member of the executive board, Tom Thomas, who was president, resigned in the fall of 1975. At the time of the Advisory Committee study, Camille Mollo, of Westover School, was president. The executive board members head subcommittees on scholarship, budget, elementary school curriculum, middle school curriculum, health and bus safety, special programs, and legislation. The board also publishes a bimonthly newsletter. The citywide group separated itself from the statewide PTA in order to give both PTA and PTO groups equal voting rights on the council.

The elementary schools have a system of homeroom mothers (appointed by the principals) who contact parents in their children's classes about PTA and school events.

Mrs. Mollo, the citywide council president, and other parents interviewed said that there was very little participation of black parents in the parent groups or in the school system. They attributed the lack of participation to several factors: the high number of black parents who work; transportation problems of many black parents who do not have cars; the traditional all-white character of the parent organizations; the "hostile" environment of the schools to which their children were bused (the children of some black parents attend the same school as the white children of families for whom the black parents work). (pp. 95-97, 157-58, 233)

Mrs. Mollo said that her efforts to involve black parents in regular PTA meetings at the Westover School had not been successful. She also said that the citywide council had recently changed its structure and had not yet attempted to increase black participation. (pp. 96-97)

Several other persons testified, however, that they had been successful in involving black parents in the school system. Tom Thomas, past president of the citywide council and former president of the Ryle School PTA, said that he had increased black parent participation at Ryle from less than 10 percent to 90 percent. He said that he had taken 2 weeks off from work and conducted a door-to-door recruitment campaign in order to interest the parents. (pp. 188-90)

Dindy Harris was successful in increasing black participation at Stillmeadow School where she headed the parents' organization when the school first opened. She said that only a few black parents attended the first meeting at Stillmeadow. A white parent, she said, stood up and asked all persons interested in becoming officers to fill out forms stating their educational backgrounds. No blacks attended the next meeting. Mrs. Harris then held a planning meeting in the downtown apartment owned by a black parent and asked several black mothers to organize a larger general meeting. Black--but not many white--parents attended the meeting featuring bingo at the local community center.

Mrs. Harris organized events at the school of interest to both black and white parents and had good participation by both black and white parents at parent-student volleyball games, winter carnivals, etc. Buses were provided to take the black parents and students back and forth from these

events. She said that only a few black parents attended the regular meetings at the school. But, as a result of her efforts, the Stillmeadow executive board of the Stillmeadow parent group always had several black members.[31]

The black community did not agree on the best method to increase black participation in the school system. J. Ralph Murray, the only black member of the finance board, stressed the role of the black community in increasing black participation in the school system. Mr. Murray said the black community should "convince ourselves to take this active role in our schools and do it ourselves."(p. 184) However, many other persons interviewed said the school department should take steps to increase communication with the black community.

Gordon Mack and Elaine Wickens, staff from the Bank Street College of Education project at Ryle School, stressed the importance of black and white parent participation. They said that they had recommended a paid parent coordinator for each school.(pp. 360-61)

In the early 1970s, approximately five persons were hired as "community liaison" personnel to increase communication between the community--particularly the minority community--and the schools. Several years later, the title of these persons was changed to "attendance assistants" and their function became largely that of truant officers. Several persons recommended that the minority community liaison program should be revived. At the informal public hearing, Dr. Toner, director for special pupil services, said that attendance had improved and the school department was reconsidering the function of these persons and changing their focus to community liaison activity.(pp. 353-55)

Notes to Chapter III

1. Page numbers in parentheses cited here and hereafter in this report refer to statements made to the Connecticut Advisory Committee during its informal public hearing in Stamford, Conn., Apr. 29, 1976, as recorded in the transcript of that hearing. The transcript is available for review in the Stamford Public Library and in the Commission's Northeastern Regional Office, New York, N.Y.

2. James Morris, assistant superintendent for personnel, staff interview, Stamford, Conn., Mar. 2, 1976.

3. Stamford, Conn., Board of Education (hereafter cited as Board of Education), Affirmative Action Plan, pp. 1-7.

4. Ibid.

5. Jacques E. Wilmore, Director, USCCR Northeastern Regional Office, letter to Ellen Camhi, chairperson, Stamford Board of Education, July 9, 1976.

6. Board of Education, Affirmative Action Plan, p. 4.

7. Dr. Robert Peebles, superintendent, Stamford Public Schools, letter to Jacques E. Wilmore, Director, USCCR Northeastern Regional Office, Dec. 13, 1976, p. 3 (hereafter cited as Peebles Letter).

8. Ibid.

9. Thomas Reardon, assistant superintendent for instruction, staff interview, Stamford, Conn., Feb. 26, 1976 (hereafter cited as Reardon Interview).

10. Several persons cited Ryle School, the magnet elementary school with the special program set up by the Bank Street College of Education, as one example where real progress toward integration has been achieved in the classroom (transcript, pp. 114-16, 356-74). Mary Alice

Montaine, president of the Hart School PTA, said that the classrooms were generally well integrated at Hart (staff interview, Stamford, Conn., Mar. 26, 1976) (hereafter cited as Montaine Interview).

11. Reardon Interview.

12. Reports of these interviews are on file at the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Northeastern Regional Office, New York, N. Y. All information not specifically footnoted in this report is derived from interviews for this study.

13. Montaine Interview.

14. Resource rooms are designed to help students with the so-called cognitive skills, or the ability to reason. Reardon Interview.

15. Also, John G. Bynoe, Office of Civil Rights, DHEW, letter to Dr. Robert Peebles, superintendent, Stamford Public Schools, Mar. 10, 1976 (hereafter cited as Bynoe Letter).

16. Bynoe Letter, pp. 10-11.

17. Reardon Interview.

18. Maria Quezada, director of bilingual programs, Stamford Public Schools, telephone interview, Feb. 25, 1976.

19. Bynoe Letter.

20. Pauline Rauh, coordinator for staff development, Stamford Public Schools, telephone interview, Feb. 25, 1976; also, Reardon Interview.

21. Board of Education, Policy No. 5114.

22. Derived from a composite of information gained during the interviews for this study.

23. Peebles Letter, p. 4.

24. Elaine Wickens, director, Ryle School project of Bank Street College of Education, staff interview, Stamford Conn., Mar. 18, 1976.

25. Edward Friedlander, director of testing and guidance, Stamford Public Schools, staff interview, Stamford, Conn., Mar. 11, 1976.

26. Ibid.

27. Board of Education, "Report of the Committee to Evaluate Phase I of Elementary Education to the Board of Education" (September 1976).

28. Ibid., p. 31.

29. Nicholas Fortunato, president of the Love Neighborhood Association and founder of Citizens For A Neighborhood School, staff interview, Greenwich, Conn., Mar. 26, 1976.

30. Camille Moll[illegible] president, Stamford Parent Teacher Council, staff interview, Stamford, Conn., Mar. 11, 1976.

31. Dindy Harris, former president, Stillmeadow PTA, staff interview, Stamford, Conn., Mar. 10, 1976.

IV. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1: The Stamford Board of Education successfully developed and implemented plans for the desegregation of the high, middle, and elementary schools over a 15-year period. These plans, through redistricting, the construction of new schools, and the reassignment and transportation of students, achieved racial balance in the large majority of the schools. Many board members, school staff, and community leaders exhibited a strong commitment to integrated education throughout the process. During the desegregation of the elementary schools in 1972, greater community participation in general and, for the first time, significant participation from the minority community was evident.

Recommendation No. 1: As the population shifts within the city and the racial composition changes at selected schools, the school board should continue to monitor the student populations by race and ethnicity in order to maintain the racial balance in the city schools. This should be done with the minimum reassignment of students and the maximum use of the magnet school concept and the greatest possible participation of the community.

Finding No. 2: The underrepresentation of minority staff in teaching, administrative, and other professional positions is one of the most serious problems in the school system. There are several elementary schools without any black or Hispanic teachers. More minority staff are needed to give black and Hispanic students the necessary role models and to open more channels of communication for the minority students, many of whom are alienated from the school system and the educational process.

Although the new affirmative action guidelines contain much that is commendable, the procedure used for setting goals is inadequate, and adequate timetables are not established for all areas.

Recommendation No. 2-A: The board of education should revise its affirmative action guidelines to require that hiring goals be based on the percentage of minorities in the student population as well as the availability of minority professional staff in the Nation.

Recommendation No. 2-B: The board of education should grant high priority to implementation and adequate funding of recruitment and upward mobility procedures as set forth in the affirmative action guidelines as revised June 11, 1976.

Finding No. 3: Ability grouping as it now operates tends to resegregate the school system and reinforce feelings of inadequacy in minority students in the middle and high schools. The 1-4 groupings place many lower income students, who are predominately black and Spanish speaking, in the lower groups and the higher income students, who are predominately white, in the higher groups.

Recommendation No. 3: To the extent that it is educationally feasible, the school board should take steps to eliminate ability grouping at all educational levels. Because many students remain through high school in the group to which they are originally assigned, particular attention should be given to the middle school, where the first assignment takes place.

Finding No. 4: Although no comprehensive survey was conducted, interviews and testimony at the informal hearing suggested that some teachers had difficulty understanding and communicating with the minority students assigned to their schools.

Recommendation No. 4: The staff development office should continue and expand effective teacher training programs in the areas of interpersonal relations. These workshops should be mandatory for all teachers and should be designed to impart a fuller understanding of the minority subculture.

Finding No. 5: As in all urban school systems, discipline is an ongoing problem in the Stamford public schools. The Advisory Committee is concerned about the larger issue of the equal treatment of students in all disciplinary proceedings.

Recommendation No. 5: The school board should appoint a committee including representatives of the board, school

administration, teachers, student population, and the community to review the problem and consider issues such as the role of the administrative and teaching staff in disciplinary proceedings; methods of increasing student participation in those proceedings; the impartial implementation of the discipline code; and innovative experiments such as the inschool suspension program.

Finding No. 6: The U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) has cited a number of deficiencies in the special education program. Procedures established to assign and monitor students in the special education classes are inadequate and a disproportionate number of minority students in comparison to their representation in the student body is assigned to those classes. A total of 29 out of 42 classes are racially identifiable or isolated. There are no minority teachers in the special education program and there is an underrepresentation of minority staff in counseling and special service programs.

Recommendation No. 6: Steps should be taken to correct deficiencies cited by HEW. In addition, because of the relatively high number of minority students in special education programs, particular attention should be given to the underrepresentation of black and Spanish-speaking staff in special education classes and to the provision of counseling and other special student services.

Finding No 7: Although no comprehensive review of programs for Spanish-speaking and other non-English-speaking students was conducted, members of both the Spanish-speaking community and school department staff said that Spanish-speaking students were "at the bottom of the ladder." Many specific deficiencies in programs for non-English-speaking students were cited by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Recommendation No. 7: The educational problems of Spanish-speaking students should be carefully reviewed and steps should be taken to provide educational, psychological, and social support to them. Deficiencies cited by HEW should be corrected.

Finding No. 8: For a number of reasons, there is inadequate participation on the part of minority parents in the parent-teacher associations and groups at both the school and citywide level. Except for isolated instances, there has

been little effort on the part of the school department or the PTA/O officers to correct this situation. The Hispanic parents are even less active than the black parents, to a large degree because of a language barrier and cultural and socioeconomic differences. Bilingual and bicultural assistance appears to be inadequate.

Recommendation No. 8-A: The school board should reinstate the community liaison staff as parent organizers giving particular attention to reaching black and Spanish-speaking parents. Whenever possible, meetings, activities, and events should be held on a rotating basis in the minority community in cooperation with minority group organizations.

Recommendation No. 8-B: Minority organizations and churches should develop educational programs such as tutorial counseling and parental involvement projects in cooperation with the community liaison staff.

* U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1977 728-024/474